

ANS 301R [#31425], CTI 310 [#33780], and R S 302 [#43560]

**HISTORY OF THE RELIGIONS OF ASIA**

Fall 2011

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This course surveys the central beliefs and patterns of life of living religious traditions of Asia. It will focus particularly on the basic texts or narratives of these traditions, on their essential histories, and on the concepts of humanity, the world, and the divine that are distinctive of each. In addition, the course will explore not only what people believe religiously but also what they do religiously. Part of the course, therefore, will consider the ways of life, forms of social action, and rituals practiced by different communities. Not all Asian traditions can be included in a one-semester survey. The traditions chosen include large numbers of adherents, have particular historical significance, and represent different cultural areas.

**Written Assignments and Attendance:**

Written assignments include three interpretive essays on the primary texts assigned in the course, a midterm, and a final. The final exam is scheduled on Wednesday, December 7, 9am-12pm. Please do not make travel arrangements to leave Austin before that date since we are not able to change the time of the final.

The final grade for written work will be determined as follows:

Midterm	20%
Three essays	50%
Final	30%

Regrettably, excessive unexcused absences (beyond 4) or persistent failure to prepare the assignments on time or both can result in a reduction of up to one full grade. On the other hand, vigorous and informed participation in class discussion can help a grade, especially a marginal one. Other factors, such as a student's progress or effort in the course, may also affect final grades for the class.

**Grading:**

This class uses plus/minus grading on a scale of 93-100 A, 90-92 A-, 87-89 B+, 83-86 B, 80-82 B-, 77-79 C+, 73-76 C, 70-72 C-, etc.

**Posted Materials:**

Assignments, handouts, and some additional materials will be posted on Blackboard. You can access the Blackboard site for this course from <http://courses.utexas.edu/>.

**Special Needs:**

At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructor by presenting a letter prepared by the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. Students can contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

**Academic Honesty:**

Be careful not to copy the work of peers or to use material without proper attribution. Nothing can be more disastrous for your grade or for your college record than to be found to have violated the University rules on academic honesty. Students who violate these rules are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course or dismissal from the University or both. If you have any questions about properly utilizing sources, check with the TA or instructor.

**Required Texts:**

John L. Esposito et al., *Religions of Asia Today*

R. K. Narayan, tr., *The Ramayana*

Patrick Olivelle, tr., *The Buddhacarita: Life of the Buddha* (available on Blackboard)

Burton Watson, tr., *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*

Hiroaki Sato, tr., *Basho's Narrow Road: Spring and Autumn Passage*

Additional assigned readings will be available on the Blackboard site.

Please note: the following schedule is subject to change according to the unfolding dictates of *karma* and the shifting course of the *Dao*.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
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**HINDUISM**

*August*

- |    |                                   |                      |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 24 | Introduction and the Hindu World  |                      |
| 26 | The Hindu & Buddhist World        | Esposito, pp. 75-161 |
| 29 | Meditation and the Way of Insight |                      |
| 31 | The Story of Rāma                 | <i>The Ramayana</i>  |

*September*

- |    |                                |   |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 2  | The Story of Rāma              | <i>The Ramayana</i>   |
| 7  | The Story of Rāma              | <i>The Ramayana</i>   |
| 9  | Images of Beauty: Kṛṣṇa        | <b>Essay on <i>The Ramayana</i>.</b> “Baby Kṛṣṇa,” “Kṛṣṇa/Kāliya,” “Kṛṣṇa/Clothing,” “Rāsālīlā” |
| 12 | Images of Power: Śiva and Devī | “Brahmā,” “Śiva/Sages,” “Durgā”   |
| 14 | Images of Power: Śiva and Devī |   |

**ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA**

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|----|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 16 | The Unity and Diversity of Islam | Esposito, pp. 335-357 |
| 19 | Islam in South Asia              |                       |

**BUDDHISM**

- |    |                          |  |
|----|--------------------------|--|
| 21 | Introduction to Buddhism | Esposito, pp. 163-191  |
| 23 | Introduction to Buddhism |  |
| 26 | Life of the Buddha       | <i>Jātaka</i> stories, <i>Buddhacarita</i> ( <i>The Life of the Buddha</i> ) |
| 28 | Life of the Buddha       |  |

30 The Four Noble Truths Selection from E. Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*: “The Questions of King Milinda”

*October*

3 The Four Noble Truths Selection from J. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*: “The Path”  
Esposito, pp. 192-243

5 The Four Noble Truths Selection from J. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*: “Meditation”

7 The Four Noble Truths

10 Mahāyāna: Bodhisattvas & Buddhas **Essay** on *The Life of the Buddha*

12 Mahāyāna: Emptiness & Mind Only “The Heart Sūtra” “The Diamond Sūtra”

14 Vajrayāna

17 **Midterm Exam**

**CHINESE TRADITIONS**

19 Introduction to East Asian Worldview Esposito, pp. 245-253

21 Ancient Traditions

22 The Confucian Tradition Esposito, pp. 254-291, “Mencius” “Filial Exemplars”

24 The Confucian Tradition

26 The Daoist Tradition *Zhuangzi*

28 The Daoist Tradition *Zhuangzi*

31 Religious Daoism

*November*

2 Religious Daoism **Essay** on *Zhuangzi*

4 Mahāyāna Buddhism in China

7 Mahāyāna Buddhism in China

9 The Confucian Revival

**JAPANESE TRADITIONS**

11 Early History

14 History and Religion

16 Shintō

18 Shintō

21 Shintō

M. Norinaga “Way of the Gods”

23 Shintō Transformations

28 Shintō

Esposito, pp. 292-329

30 Zen

*Basho's Narrow Road*

*December*

2 Zen

*Basho's Narrow Road*